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Chairman: Mr. Suheimat (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Jordan)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Suheimat (Jordan), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 156: Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives (A/55/164 and Add.1 and 2)

1. **Mr. Alabrune** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, said that the Secretary-General's report (A/55/164 and Add.1 and 2) showed that the need to reassert the principles of international law relating to diplomatic and consular relations was as pertinent as ever. Any diminution of the effective protection of diplomatic and consular staff would endanger the objective of establishing relations of trust among nations and concord among peoples. The European Union would participate in all efforts aimed at guaranteeing and strengthening the right of such staff to protection and security. It therefore considered it would be very useful to adopt a resolution similar to General Assembly resolution 53/97 calling on States, particularly host States, to implement the relevant provisions of international law. The European Union welcomed the growing number of accessions to the relevant multilateral instruments but considered that the latter deserved universal acceptance. It therefore called on States which were not parties to accede to them with all speed.

2. **Ms. Lind** (Norway), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden, welcomed the fact that the General Assembly continued to consider the agenda item, which the Nordic countries had introduced in 1980, on a regular basis. The need to protect the representatives of States had been recognized for many centuries, in all cultures and legal systems. Host States were under an obligation to provide such protection, which was a basic prerequisite for the normal conduct of relations among States. The aim was to protect the channels of communication between States, not particular individuals, and to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security. By the same token, diplomatic and consular representatives should respect the laws and regulations of the host State.

3. The Nordic countries strongly condemned acts of violence against diplomatic and consular representatives and representatives and officials of international intergovernmental organizations. They particularly deplored incidents in which innocent lives had been taken or endangered. Continued awareness and precautionary measures were still needed in order to enhance the security of personnel and the unhindered conduct of diplomatic and consular relations. Close cooperation between sending and receiving States was needed. The Nordic countries appealed to all States that had not done so to become parties to the relevant international legal instruments. They also stressed the importance of the procedures for reporting violations of the protection of diplomatic and consular premises and personnel, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

4. **Mr. Uykur** (Turkey) said that his delegation, which aligned itself with the statement on behalf of the European Union, attached particular importance to the agenda item. His country was a party to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, which indicated its commitment to the regular conduct of international relations. Turkish diplomats, however, had been especially subject to terrorist attacks, and increasingly since 1974, yet the perpetrators had been tolerated in some countries for reasons of political expediency. Some of those countries had reviewed their policies only after their own citizens had suffered similar attacks. In some cases, States had attributed the terrorist acts to organizations whose existence and members — if any — had never been traced. The protection provided by some States to Turkish missions and representatives did not correspond to the nature of the threat and therefore called into question their will to combat crimes against diplomatic and consular representatives. The provision of protection was both a legal and a moral requirement. States should use the reporting mechanism established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 35/168, and elaborated in subsequent resolutions, to report any serious violations of the security and safety of diplomats, giving a clear picture of measures taken and results achieved. He called on all States parties to comply with their obligations under the various conventions and refrain

from treating such crimes selectively on the basis of narrow policy considerations.

5. **Ms. Álvarez Núñez** (Cuba) said that her delegation unequivocally condemned all attacks against diplomatic and consular representatives throughout the world, since they violated the relevant principles of international law. In that context her delegation noted with concern the letters addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations (S/2000/102 and S/2000/765). The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations should be respected, and the Committee's consideration of the agenda item would go far to encourage such respect. She also urged all Member States to accede to the relevant Conventions, particularly the Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in Their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character. In that connection, her delegation believed that the scope of the Secretary-General's report should be extended to include all the multilateral instruments relating to diplomatic immunities and prerogatives and diplomatic and consular relations.

6. **Mr. Fadaifard** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the various General Assembly resolutions and the relevant international conventions, several instances of violence against the premises of diplomatic and consular missions and their personnel had unfortunately occurred over the past two years. The recent terrorist attack against the United Kingdom embassy in Yemen was the latest indication that threats of such violence had not abated. It was a matter of concern that in certain cases the perpetrators of such heinous crimes had yet to be brought to justice. Iranian diplomats had been the targets of many incidents over the years. Of particular concern was the case of the Iranian Chargé d'affaires in Beirut, who had been abducted in 1982, together with three embassy staff members. Since then no credible information as to their fate had been received. There was every reason to believe that they were still alive and in captivity. The anguish of their families could well be imagined. A more recent case concerned the massacre of all the staff of the Consulate General, together with an Iranian journalist, by Taliban forces in Mazar-e-Sharif in August 1998. The Taliban leaders had yet to heed the demand of the international community that they cooperate with the United Nations in investigating that barbaric crime with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice. His delegation urged all States to comply with their treaty obligations to prosecute those responsible for such crimes. The reporting mechanism established by General Assembly resolution 42/154 had proved its usefulness and should continue to be applied.

7. **Mr. Sheikh** (Saudi Arabia) said that his country regarded the protection, security and safety of the diplomatic missions in its territory as a patriotic and religious duty. The local authorities took care to protect diplomatic and consular missions, the missions of international organizations and their representatives and staff in accordance with the principles of international law and the relevant international conventions. His Government also attached particular importance to ensuring that diplomatic missions in Saudi Arabia were able to perform their duties in a secure and safe environment, to which end an entire section of Riyadh offering the requisite services had been set aside. The security authorities responded positively to requests from diplomatic missions for heightened security measures and took the necessary steps to forestall any illegal activities which might affect the security and safety of such missions. Consequently, no attacks on foreign missions or their staff had taken place and their work had not been impeded.

8. **Mr. Krokhmal** (Ukraine) said that the privileges and immunities of diplomatic and consular missions and their staff were intended not for personal benefit but to ensure the unhindered exercise of their functions. The relevant international legal regime should therefore be enhanced. His delegation called on all States that had not yet done so to accede to the relevant international instruments as soon as possible. States should have in place an effective mechanism, including preventive measures, to prevent acts of violence against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives and to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice. His delegation supported all the practical measures undertaken by States to prevent and prohibit in their territories the activities of persons or organizations that encouraged, organized or engaged in the perpetration of such acts.

9. **Mr. Al-Dailmi** (Yemen) expressed agreement with much of what had been said by previous speakers. His Government strongly condemned all acts of violence or terrorism, whatever their target or source, and deeply regretted the attack against the United

Kingdom Embassy in Sana'a. The authorities had taken appropriate measures to investigate that criminal act and would do all in its power to prosecute those responsible.

Other matters

10. **Ms. Álvarez Núñez** (Cuba) suggested that the Fifth Committee should engage in discussions with the other relevant Committees on the criteria for the proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. Specifically, it would be useful to discuss programme 5, Legal affairs, for although the methodology of the medium-term plans was satisfactory the language used was becoming oversimplified or inappropriate, at least in relation to matters affecting the Sixth Committee. At times General Assembly mandates were not fully reflected.

11. After a procedural discussion, in which **Ms. Álvarez Núñez** (Cuba), **Ms. Willson** (United States of America) and **Mr. Manongi** (United Republic of Tanzania) took part, the Chairman suggested that the representative of Cuba should submit her delegation's comments in writing. He would pass them to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. If time permitted, a meeting between the two Committees might be arranged.

12. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.